to the poor in a transparent, and accurate manner.

(v) Specially subsidised foodgrains will be issued also to all beneficiaries under the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS)/Jawahar Rozgar Yoja-na (JRY) at the rate of one kg. per man day.

(c) State Government/UT Administrations have been asked to identify the poor and ensure proper and effective delivery system, in a transparent and accurate manner. As soon as a Statc/UT has made all necessary arrangements, it can start deriving the benefits under TPDS.

Special Subsidy under Revamped PDS

120. SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC r>TSTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have declared that food articles will be given to people below poverty line at a special subsidised rate;

(b) if so, the number of people below poverty line in India;

(c) the additional cost the Government has to bear on account of special subsidy;

(d) in what manner Government intend to distribute the specially subsidised articles to the poor;

(e) whether present system of PDS will be able to cover all the people below poverty line in the country; and

(f) if not, in what manner Government intend to reach them?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government have decided to streamline the Public Distribution System with focus on the poor covering about 3203.68 lakh persons (35.97% of total population) below the poverty line as per the estimates for 1993-94, based on the methodology adopted by the Expert Group under the Chairmanship of late Prof. Lakdawala.

(c) The additional subsidy commitment for providing foodgrains at about half the prices to the poor will depend on Central Issue Price (CIP) fixed by the Government from time to time.

(d) State Government/UT Administrations have been asked to identify the people below poverty line and issue special cards to such families and to make necessary arrangements for delivery of foodgrains through Fair Price Shops and its distribution in a transparent and accountable manner.

(e) and (f) The present PDS is universal in nature and covers the entire population of the country. Government have decided to introduce Targeted Public Distribution System with focus on poor i.e. the population below the poverty line.

Bogus Ration Cards and Diversion of Ration Quota

121. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a meeting of the State Minister/Secretaries was called recently to discuss the proposal for revamping of Public Distribution System;

(b) if so, the details of final decisions taken in the meeting and policies formulated and implications thereof;

(c) the specific improvements proposed in PDS to tackle the problem of bogus cards and nexus between traders and officers in diversion of quota meant for fair price shops to open market for financial gains; and

(d) the steps taken for strengthening of monitoring mechanism?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) A Conference of State Food Ministers was held on 7th August, 1996 to discuss the question of targeting the Public Distribution System(PDS) with focus on the poor and the following conclusions were arrived at:—

(i) The Conference unanimously endorsed the proposal for targeted PDS, especially the provision of and subsidised foodgrains to the population below poverty line and recommended that the Central Government bring in this targeted PDS into force as soon as possible.

(ii) In regard to hill States, border States and States with inaccessible areas and food-dificit States, the allocation of adequate foodgrains is of special importance. Their requirements have to be considered on special basis taking into account the particular problem of each State/UT, more so where normal markets do not function.

(iii) Any suddden withdrawal of the population above the poverty line from the existing public distribution would create problems. Hence, allocation of foodgrains for this section would need to be protected. The requirements of highly food-deficit States/UTs should be specially kept in view in this regard.

(iv) The Central Issue Prices (CIPs) at which the foodgrains will be issued to the non-poor may not be increased suddenly and sharply. The rates of increase should be gradual.

(v) Generally, the adoption of estimates of the Export Group under the Chairmanship of Late Prof. Lakdawala on the population below poverty line is endorsed. However, the same should be applied to the latest available population figures instead of 1991 census figures.

(vi) Precise identification of beneficiaries and issue of cards to the population below poverty line as indicated in No. (v) above would be the responsibility of State Government/' UT Administrations.

(c) and (d) PDS is implemented under the joint responsibility of Central and State Governments. The operational aspects of PDS including the question of bogus cards, nexus between traders and officers in diversion of quota meant for Fair Price Shops to open market for Inancial gains etc. are within the administrative jurisdiction of the State Government/UT Administrations. However, under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) emphasis has been laid on transperency in distribution, monitoring the system, at Fair Price Shop level, periodical reporting setting up of Vigilance Committees at Fair Price Shops, Taluk, District and State levels and involvement of Panchayats and Nagar Palikas, etc. for strengthening the monitoring mechanism.

Revamping the Agency for PDS

122. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the statement of the Minister of Finance regarding major practical hitches in implementing the programme to distribute subsidised foodgrains to the people below poverty line and the need to revamp the agency for the Public Distribution System and the Food Corporation of India;

(b) if so, the action taken in the matter;

(c) whether the new PDS programme finally would take effect from June, 1997 or will it be delayed further?